

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT'S FILES

FROM: B/GEN. BRENT SCOWCROFT

SUBJECT: The President's Meeting with Ambassador John Scali

DATE AND TIME: Tuesday, February 13, 1973
11:43 a.m.

PLACE: Oval Office

PARTICIPANTS: President Nixon
Brigadier General Brent Scowcroft
John A. Scali, U. S. Ambassador to the UN

The meeting began at 11:43 a.m. with the President and Ambassador Scali walking around the Rose Garden for press photos. Upon their return to the Oval Office, the President asked Ambassador Scali when he planned to depart. Scali said he would present his credentials when Secretary-General Waldheim returned from Bangladesh. The President thereupon observed that he thought Waldheim not too strong a Secretary-General, but better than U Thant. He asked that Scali give Waldheim his regards and tell him on Scali's behalf that his predecessor had leaned constantly toward Communist countries. We would hope that Waldheim would not lean in any direction at all. The President asked that Scali point out to Waldheim that the situation was difficult in terms of financial support for the UN. We will do what we can for the UN, but Congress is responsible for our inability to do more. Nothing has hurt the UN more with the American people, said the President, than the failure to act on terrorism. It is difficult to understand how we can be in a position of being the major supporter of the UN and yet unable to get a resolution which all countries should naturally want to support. The President noted, however, that the UN had made progress on environmental matters and in peacekeeping operations.

The President told Scali that with regard to the Middle East we were following two approaches -- an open approach by Secretary Rogers and through our private contacts with the USSR, the Egyptians and the Israelis. He, Scali, must know nothing officially of any of these private approaches. It is

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important for him to know for his own background that they exist but he should keep totally to the public line. The President noted that we were the only friend of the Israelis and that Israel has only contempt for the UN. We cannot allow Mrs. Meir to keep her present totally intransigent attitude, and Scali might be able to float some ideas through his contacts that could be useful. The President doubted that the Middle East would ever be totally settled, but felt that we should get started on something and that a private channel would best serve our interests. A private channel is preferable for negotiations because if talks in the public channel were to fail, the result would be catastrophic. The public channel is useful when we know that we will succeed. The President cautioned that this was a tough issue and that Scali should maintain close contact with State and the NSC on it.

The President then asked what Scali planned to do at the UN, and Scali responded that he intended to be a spokesman for the President and the US on our foreign policy as a whole. In his appearance the previous Sunday on ISSUES AND ANSWERS, he said he had observed that the President's visits to the USSR and PRC had opened up initiatives which contributed to world peace, and the result had therefore not had the effect of bypassing the UN. Scali said that he would not hesitate to speak out strongly for the US and that he planned to make substantial changes in his staff in the direction of a tougher approach. He planned to bring in as ambassadors a woman and a black and noted that there were only two blacks on his staff. The President concurred strongly and pointed out that since the UN was mostly non-white we should have more blacks on the staff. Scali pointed out that the UN was the only embassy staff without a living allowance and that New York was so expensive that it hampered him in his selection of people. For example, he said he would have liked to have obtained Ambassador Brown (Jordan), but that Brown could not afford to live in New York City. The President suggested that Scali talk with Congressman Rooney and point out to him that the lack of a living allowance meant that the USUN staff was able to attract only rich dilettantes and that we need instead some sound, hard workers.

The President said that he knew he was not a popular figure in the UN but that Scali, with his experience, could move among the other Ambassadors and help to explain things. The UN, for example, should be even handed toward the US and smaller states should not "gang up" against the big powers. The President felt that the British had only contempt for the UN

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and the French had little use for it. The UN needs to regain some stature and the President said he would be delighted if the UN could accomplish something.

Scali thought that if Waldheim were to chair the upcoming International Conference, it would enhance his reputation and that of the UN. The President asked that Scali tell Waldheim that and also point out that the tendency in the Conference would be to be harsh towards South Vietnam. We would expect Waldheim to insist on even-handed treatment, and how he handled it would be a test of his relationship with the US. At Scali's suggestion, the President agreed to invite Waldheim to Washington for a visit if his conduct had earned such a reward. Scali said that he would be advising the President in this regard.

Scali expressed his appreciation to the President for bringing him into the White House family and for subsequently giving him this new, very responsible job. He expressed his total dedication to giving the President the very best support possible. The President responded that Kissinger and Rogers had felt that Scali should not get the UN job because of his news media background, but that the President had insisted. The President observed that Kissinger and Rogers were now pleased with the selection.

The President expressed his delight in the performance of the released POWs and likened the impact of this event to that of Neil Armstrong stepping onto the moon. The President thought that it was very good for the US to see some brave men and to have some heroes.

The President then suggested that Scali read the Fairley book on Kennedy, at least that portion beginning with Chapter 11. He observed that it was a very interesting book for its analysis of foreign policy and of the handling of problems of international commitments and expectations.

The President said that we do not intend to lecture countries on their internal structure, either in cases like that of the Philippines at present, or that of Communist countries. Our concern is for foreign policy behavior and we will aid dictatorships if it is in our interest to do so. Our opposition to Cuba, PRC and the USSR has been based on their external policy of aggression and subversion. When they modify those policies, we will modify our policy toward them. Cuba, in this regard, has not yet changed. The President then noted that President Echeverria had been behaving very

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badly toward the US, both in his speech at the UN, and in his public utterances in Mexico. The President said he had personal affection for Echeverria but that it was difficult for him to understand why countries like Mexico were always attacking the US. We do not ask other countries for their affection, but only to be treated fairly. Countries which continually attack the US can no longer expect to get aid and Scali should point that out in his discussions in the UN. The Congress was becoming increasingly opposed to aid programs in general, and would refuse such aid to countries which were condemning US policy. The President said that the US was tired of the double standard used by many countries in comparing the US and Communist behavior. The President concluded the discussion by telling Scali not to be belligerent on this issue, but he pointed out that a little moral indignation is sometimes appropriate. He suggested that Scali make his statements on this issue in front of the TV camera so that he could not be misquoted.

The meeting concluded at 12:25 p.m.

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